Research Planning and Coordination Staff

Dr. Ambrose Jearld, Jr. is now Acting Chief, Research Planning and Coordination Staff (RPAC). Dr. Michael P. Sissenwine who served as RPAC Chief since 1988 left this month to serve as the new Chief Scientist for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Habitat Protection

1. The New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils adopted revised habitat policies and procedures to meet their expanded responsibilities under the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The 1990 Amendments to the Act charge the Councils with reviewing and commenting on proposed developmental activities that are likely to substantially affect habitats of anadromous fishery resources under their jurisdiction.

2. A national planning team met at NMFS headquarters to develop a budget enhancement proposal for habitat protection programs necessary to implement the NMFS Strategic Plan. A NOAA team met concurrently at the NOAA Coastal Ocean Program Office to revise the strategies for implementing the NOAA Habitat Conservation Strategic Plan.

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NEFC Research Planning

1. The Quarterly Reports for the first quarter of FY91 were submitted to the Science and Research Director. The report describes the status of Center investigations, listing the products generated and noting project accomplishments.

2. The FY91 Current Year Operating Plans (CYOPs) have been submitted to NMFS Headquarters. Delivery of the CYOPs this year was delayed due to budget negotiations between Congress and the administration and changes incorporated by NMFS Headquarters. The Goal/Objective array was revised to reflect the goals contained in the NMFS Strategic Plan. Although, neither the Personnel Schedule form nor the Milestone Array from the investigations will go to Headquarters this year, the Center Directorate received the Milestone Array for the purpose of tracking the completion of the MAEs in the Quarterly Reports. NMFS Headquarters will use the Annual Operating Plan and Monthly Operating Review (MOR) inputs to track the progress of Center Investigations that are dealing with high profile agency issues.

Vessel Operations

1. The Delaware II completed Cruise 91-03, Larval Herring/Sand Lance Study. The cruise was the fifth in a series of surveys designed to monitor the changing status of Atlantic herring in the Georges Bank area and the recruitment of sand lance larvae. Jerome Prezioso, Fisheries Ecology Division, Narragansett Laboratory (401-782-3277), was Chief Scientist for the cruise.

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3. The Center submitted six one page project identification pre-proposals to the Coastal Ocean Program (COP) office at NOAA. These project ideas will be incorporated into the COP planning process for FY93 and beyond. The Center submitted one potential project for each of the following theme areas of the COP: Nutrient-enhanced Productivity, Estuarine Habitat, and Satellite Observations and Predictions; two for the Toxic Chemical Contamination theme area; and three for the Coastal Fisheries Ecosystems theme area. Two of the one pagers had potential applicability to two different COP theme areas.

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Obituary
Richard C. Hennemuth died 15 February 1991 at age 60. Mr. Hennemuth served as Chief of the Research Planning and Coordination Staff from 1985, when the group was formed, until his retirement from the Center in 1988.
Fisheries Management

The 12th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW), Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) met in Woods Hole 3 - 8 June 1991 to conduct a thorough technical review of analyses for eight species/stocks from the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions: Atlantic mackerel, butterfish, Gulf of Maine cod, Georges Bank and Southern New England yellowtail flounder, short and long fin squid, and sea scallops. A total of thirteen papers were presented by scientists involved in the work of these species/stocks. Papers included full and revised assessments, applications of new analytical methods, and exploration of sampling data. More than thirty persons, in addition to the SARC, attended the meeting. John B. Pearce, Acting Science and Research Director and member of the SAW Steering Committee welcomed the participants.

12th SAW SARC members are: Ray Conser, Michael Fogarty, Ralph Mayo, William Overholtz, and Andrew Rosenberg (Chair) - NMFS/NEFC; Peter Colosi - NMFS/NERO; Robert Kope - NMFS/SWFC; Gerald Scott - NMFS/SEFC; Tom Hoff - MAFMC; Pamela Mace - NEFMC; and David Pierce - ASMFC/MA DMF. The SARC report, Consensus Summary of Assessments will be presented at the SAW Plenary, 10 - 12 July.

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Vessel Operations

1. The Delaware II completed cruise 91-06, Survey of Apex Predators - Sharks, on 7 June. The main objective of the survey was to monitor distribution, abundance, and species composition of sharks and other apex predators. Chief Scientist for the cruise was Jack Casey of the Narragansett Laboratory (401-782-3320).

2. The Delaware II completed cruise 91-07, 106-Mile Dumpsite Sediment Trap Mooring Recovery, on 18 June. The cruise was under contract to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and operated by Battelle Oceans.

The objective of the cruise was to recover 10 deep-water sediment trap/current meter moorings and the EPA Real-Time Met/Current Buoy. Cruise Coordinator was John H. Ryther, Jr. of Battelle (617-934-0571).

3. NEFC and SEFC staff met in Boston, 27 June, to discuss ways to maximize vessel use between the two Centers. Discussions at the meeting will affect future scheduling of NOAA vessels: Albatross IV and Delaware II operated from the NEFC, and Oregon II and Chapman operated from the SEFC.

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NEFC Research Planning

1. A revised addition of Guidance on the NEFC Research Program for FY91 was submitted to the Science and Research Director. The document reviews the proposed FY91 research program and makes recommendations for allocations of the Center ODC funds based on the Analytical Hierarch Program (AHP) coupled to an optimization procedure. As input to the AHP/optimization procedure for allocating ODC, Center Investigations prepared descriptions of projects to be funded with ODC money and senior Center staff evaluated the effectiveness of these proposed projects in addressing the strategic goals of the agency. The report also evaluates the FY90 peer reviews of Center research components and makes recommendations on the proposed Center research program for FY91.

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2. A memo was issued to Center scientists informing them of the availability of FY92 funds to conduct research at the 19 National Estuarine Research Reserve System locations throughout the United States. The areas of emphasis are: water management, sediment management, nutrients and other chemical inputs, estuarine fishery habitat requirements, and coupling of primary and secondary production.
3. A memo was distributed to Center scientists informing them of the availability of $250-300K in FY92 for the production of synthesis documents for governmental resource managers. These funds are available through the Resource Information Delivery component of NOAA’s Coastal Ocean Program. Among the areas to be considered for synthesis document generation are: habitat requirements of living marine resources, at all stages of life history; impact of human usage of shellfish beds and seagrasses/wetlands; assessment of techniques to restore, enhance, or create important living marine resource habitats in the coastal zone (riparian zones, seagrasses, and coastal wetlands); and, the role of coastal nutrient enrichment in causing nuisance algal blooms which negatively impact living marine resources. Proposals for these funds will be submitted to NMFS by 15 July 1991.

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NOAA/URI CMER Program

1. The NOAA/URI Program has submitted its program of funded research for 1991-1992 to the NOAA Grants Management Division. Fourteen investigations with a total support of over $513,000 are anticipated. Continuing or follow-on efforts include completion and testing of a flow-through sampler for automated plankton analyzers; examinations of the relationship between the onset of coastal spring phytoplankton blooms and Calanus production patterns in the Gulf of Maine; studies relating discrete physical and biological factors and zooplankton productivity along a transect between Portland ME and Yarmouth NS; examinations of immune system responses in winter flounder and Atlantic salmon to natural and human stresses; and attempts to enhance the application of remote sensing data to fisheries research in the Northeast. Also among the on-going investigations are studies of factors affecting the selectivity of trawls, monitoring and observation of northern right whale populations off the eastern seaboard, and assessments of eutrophication in the Nation’s estuaries.

New studies will undertake assessments of the demersal gillnet fishery of the Gulf of Maine area; examine feeding, digestion, and stomach evacuation rates of key fish predators from the northeastern shelf; re-evaluate methods for estimating the abundance of sea scallop, ocean quahog, and surf clam populations; develop financial simulators for otter trawl and scallop dredge vessels; begin coastal wetland mapping and change detection analyses in the New England area using satellite-derived and traditional ground-based survey data; and initiate a student research and training program for marine mammals.

Support for the above suites of activities was provided from a combination of sources. In addition to base funds from the NEFC and NERO, support also was derived from the NMFS/NEFC Marine Mammals Investigation, special funds for Gulf of Maine studies, the NOAA National Ocean Service (Strategic Environmental Assessment Division), and several elements of the NOAA Coastal Ocean Program.

2. The results of two workshops to specify the potential range of eutrophication effects and associated factors that influence estuarine environments were recently published by NOAA and the University of Rhode Island. Entitled, The National Eutrophication Project: Workshop Proceedings, the document contains abstracts of 21 presentations and related data tables from two four-day series of invited seminars that were held in Narragansett RI, January 1991. The workshops and the summary document are part of the National Eutrophication Assessment, which is being carried out under the aegis of the NOAA/URI CMER Program.

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Research Planning and Coordination Staff

Dr. Andrew Rosenberg, Chief of the Coordination Section, has been reassigned to work on a stock assessment initiative for NMFS Headquarters. Although he will report to the NMFS Senior Scientist, Dr. Michael Sissenwine, in Washington, Dr. Rosenberg’s duty station will remain in Woods Hole. His duties include organizing and convening a National Stock Assessment Workshop and developing and editing the National Status of Fisheries Resources report.

Fisheries Management

1. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council met on 16-17 October at Salisbury, MD. Dr. William W. Fox, Jr., Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, spoke to the Council about the NMFS Strategic Plan and answered questions regarding NMFS programs and fishery issues of interest to Council members. The Council took the following actions at this meeting:

- Adopted a resolution in opposition to the proposed revisions to the “Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands”.

- Adopted Draft Amendment #2 to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and voted to submit the draft amendment to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and implementation.

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2. The New England Fishery Management Council met on 30-31 October in Danvers. The Council took the following actions:

- Moved to delete the square mesh equivalency provision of the current mesh regulations in the Groundfish Management Plan in light of the Council’s intent to require a 6 inch mesh (square or diamond) in Amendment 5.

- Approved sending letters to NMFS regarding comments on the provisions of the proposed rule for the Atlantic swordfish fishery.

- The Council was advised that the Plan Development Team is working on a stock assessment on herring through out its range.

- Approved a motion to object to any weakening of the provisions contained in the Wetland Delineating Manual.

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3. The Thirteenth Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW-13) will take place in Woods Hole in two sessions: the Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) will meet 2 - 7 December; and the Plenary meeting is scheduled for 13 - 15 January 1992. The SARC agenda is available upon request.

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Recreational Fisheries

The American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA) has completed Wave II of a three-year, comprehensive survey to demographically describe the sport fishing market and attitudes concerning the sport. According to Tackle Times, a semi-monthly newsletter prepared by AFTMA, anglers are generally more concerned about the long-term impacts of pollution (both people pollution and water pollution) on the quality of the resource, than they are about the numbers of fish that are currently available to catch. Booklets of the Wave II Executive Summary may be obtained by contacting AFTMA at (708) 381-9490 or FAX (708) 381-9518.

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Habitat Conservation

NEFSC/SEFSC Workshop on Habitat Activities was held in Woods Hole in October. The purpose of the workshop was to identify possible joint work and sources of funding. A meeting of specialists has been scheduled for Charleston to work out details for joint activities in the near-term.

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Research Council

Sole Ownership of Living Marine Resources: A Possible Solution to Overfishing, was distributed to the NEFC Executive Staff this month. Lead Authors of the document are Steve Edwards (CUD, Woods Hole), Al Bejda (EPD, Sandy Hook), and Anne Richards (CUD, Woods Hole).

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Vessel Operations

1. Delaware II conducted the Autumn Bottom Trawl Survey in three parts, beginning 9 September and ending 26 October. Chief Scientists were all from Woods Hole Laboratory (508-548-5123): Part I - Jay Burnett (x286); Part II - Malcolm Silverman (x202); and Part III - Donald Flescher (x293).
2. Staff continue to interact with the Atlantic Marine Center on the reactivation of Albatross IV. The schedule now calls for the vessel to return to Woods Hole on 24 November.

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NEFSC Research Planning

1. Comments were submitted to NMFS Headquarters on the objectives in the NMFS FY92 Annual Operating Plan to identify the goals and products to be developed by NMFS Centers and Regional Offices. NMFS objectives include: rebuild overfished marine fisheries, maintain currently productive fisheries, advance fishery forecasts and ecosystem models, integrate conservation of protected species and fisheries management, protect living marine resources habitat, and improve agency management.

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2. Center responded to NMFS Headquarters on the impact of global climate change on the ocean and coastal/estuarine waters. Comments were to Chapter 6 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on Climate Change - The IPCC Impact Assessment. Chapter 6, "World Oceans and Coastal Zone", discusses eight priority research areas which will be utilized to identify important research components of NOAA’s program in this area.

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